

Act III, scene ii

1. What is the meaning of Lady Macbeth's opening speech in this scene?

2. In this scene, what is Macbeth's state of mind?

3. On the other hand, how does Macbeth show that his resolve and ambition have become stronger?

4. What is significant about Macbeth's instructions to Lady Macbeth about how to treat Banquo at the state dinner that night?

Act III, scene iv

1. One characteristic of Shakespeare's style is his play on words. How is this demonstrated in Macbeth's response to the murderer's saying it's Banquo's blood on his face?
2. What wordplay is there in the murderer's reply that Banquo is "safe" now?
3. The dagger Macbeth saw in Act II, scene i was a hallucination. Banquo's ghost in this scene is not. How do we know?
4. What does Lady Macbeth say to Macbeth?
5. What is the significance of the conversation Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have immediately after the guests leave?
6. For what reason does Macbeth mention Macduff's name?
7. What does Macbeth say he will do next?
8. What is Macbeth's frame of mind?

Act III, scene v

1. Who is Hecate, and why is she angry?

2. What is her plan for Macbeth?

Act III, scene vi

1. How can we interpret Lennox's speech?
2. What further exposition does Shakespeare offer through the Lord?

Act IV, scene i

1. Compare the witches' speech pattern with Macbeth's.
2. What effect is Shakespeare creating by altering the speech patterns like this?
3. Describe the three apparitions and the significance of each?
4. What, after this, does Macbeth resolve?
5. Pleased with the information, what one further thing does Macbeth desire to know and what is the answer he gets?
6. What is the significance of this scene?
7. What news does Lennox give to Macbeth?
8. What is Macbeth's response?
9. What is his resolve at the end of this scene? How is this different from his previous actions?

Act IV, scene ii

1. What does Shakespeare achieve with the conversation between Ross and Lady Macduff?
2. What is the purpose of the exchange between Lady Macduff and her son?
3. What effect is created by the Messenger's entering to warn Lady Macduff?
4. Why does Shakespeare show the son's murder onstage?

Act IV, scene iii

1. What additional evidence does Shakespeare give his audience that Macbeth is a tyrant?
2. What suspicion of Macduff does Malcolm voice?
3. How do Malcolm's comments about Macbeth again bring to mind the "fair is foul" theme?
4. What literary device is Shakespeare employing when Malcolm says, "Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell"?
5. What is it that makes Malcolm suspicious of Macduff's motives?
6. How does Malcolm test Macduff's honesty?

7. How does Macduff nearly fail the test?
8. What finally convinces Malcolm?
9. What purpose does the brief dialogue about Edward the Confessor's alleged ability to heal serve?
10. After receiving word of his family's slaughter, what does Macduff resolve?

Act V, scene i

1. Explain how this entire scene is ironic.

2. What is ironic about Lady Macbeth's constant "handwashing"?

3. What does the Doctor's "Foul whisperings are abroad" speech echo?

Act V, scenes ii – vii

1. What effect is Shakespeare creating with this sequence of short scenes which follow one another so closely?
2. Whose side are Lennox, Angus, Menteith, and Caithness on?
3. What do they say about the men that Macbeth commands?
4. What is Macbeth's lament in his "my way of life
Is fallen into the sear ..." speech?
5. What is Lady Macbeth's condition, and how does Macbeth believe it could be cured?
6. What tactical strategy does Malcolm take?

7. In reaction to the news that Lady Macbeth is dead, Macbeth delivers his most famous soliloquy. What does it mean?
8. What does Macbeth recognize and how does it fit in with the "fair is foul" theme?
9. As bad as things look for Macbeth, why does he still scorn all his opponents?
10. What is the meaning of Siward's statement that Macbeth's men "on both sides do fight"?

Act V, scene viii

1. What information does Macduff tell Macbeth that makes him frightened ("Cow'd my better part")?
2. What is Macbeth's response?
3. Why does he quickly change his mind about fighting?
4. On what note does the play end?